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THE SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OF CROATIA

Letter dated 4 January 1995 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to you concerning the letter dated 19 December 1994 addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations (A/49/797), and, upon instructions of my Government, I have the honour to put forward the following positions of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The letter of the Permanent Representative of Croatia contains a series of untruths, false allegations and tendentious interpretations, which portray the Government of Croatia as not being interested in pursuing a peaceful and constructive resolution of the conflicts in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia but instead as continuing a policy of confrontation against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the demonization of the Serb people as a whole.

The statement put forward by the Croatian representative that "the Security Council on numerous occasions recognized the military involvement of the 'Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)' in Croatia by, inter alia, linking the sanctions regime imposed against the 'Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)', to the situation in the areas under Serb control in Croatia" is absolutely untrue and is a cardinal example of a false interpretation of the facts. The sanctions regime that has been unjustly imposed against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and in particular Security Council resolutions 757 (1992) of 30 May 1992, 787 (1992) of 16 November 1992 and 820 (1993) of 17 April 1993, have strictly been connected solely to the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has fulfilled all the obligations put forward in those resolutions, which has been clearly evinced by the Secretary-General in his reports. Since 4 August 1994, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia severed all political and economic links with the Bosnian Serb leadership, apart from humanitarian assistance in food,

clothing and medicine. That the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been consistently abiding by this decision, which it reached unilaterally, has been fully confirmed by the monthly reports of the Co-Chairman of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia on the operations of the International Conference's Mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia considers that the political status of the Krajina region, which is under the protection of the United Nations, should be resolved through negotiations between the parties on the basis of the Vance plan. The present attempt by the Croatian authorities to define the status of Krajina contrary to the Vance plan, which Croatia itself has accepted, can only take us further from the attainment of the only possible solution, a political one. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, for its part, has invested efforts towards a political and negotiated solution to the conflict. It has consistently advocated that a phased, step-by-step resolution of this conflict is the most viable. After the establishment of a cease-fire, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia gave its support to the resumption of negotiations on economic matters between the Zagreb and Knin authorities. In this context, Yugoslavia fully supports the accord that has been signed on economic relations between Krajina and Croatia (see S/1994/1375, appendix 1), which paves the way for the resumption of negotiations on an overall political settlement. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia would naturally accept any solution freely agreed to by the parties.

The attempt by the Permanent Representative of Croatia to present as a total fabrication the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's concerns about the forced conversion of Serb children to the Catholic faith in the Republic of Croatia is outrageous and a prime example of bigotry. According to the data presented in the Sabor (Parliament) of the Republic of Croatia, about 10,000 Orthodox children have been converted to Catholicism. Most of the clergy of the Serbian Orthodox church have been expelled from Croatia, including five of its bishops. They are not allowed by the Croatian authorities to return to Croatia, but even if they were, neither the bishops nor the priests would have a place to return to, as many Orthodox churches and parish residences have been destroyed. Even the Serbian Orthodox Church Museum in Zagreb, with exhibits dating from the 13th to the 16th century, was blown up.

The acceptance and even promotion of these vile acts by the Croatian authorities can certainly lead to stirring up religious hatred and intolerance, for which the Croatian representative has attempted to put the blame on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The statement that Yugoslavia is not a State Member of the United Nations is completely absurd and is in direct contradiction to the opinion of the United Nations Legal Counsel contained in document A/47/485, which states that General Assembly resolution 47/1 of 22 September 1992 "neither terminates nor suspends Yugoslavia's membership in the Organization ... Yugoslav missions at United Nations Headquarters and offices may continue to function and may receive and circulate documents". The effort by the Croatian representative to prevent the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from doing so is nothing short of an attempt to

pre-empt criticism of its unacceptable behaviour and its lack of will to secure a political and negotiated settlement.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under the item entitled "The situation in the occupied territories of Croatia".

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIC
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.